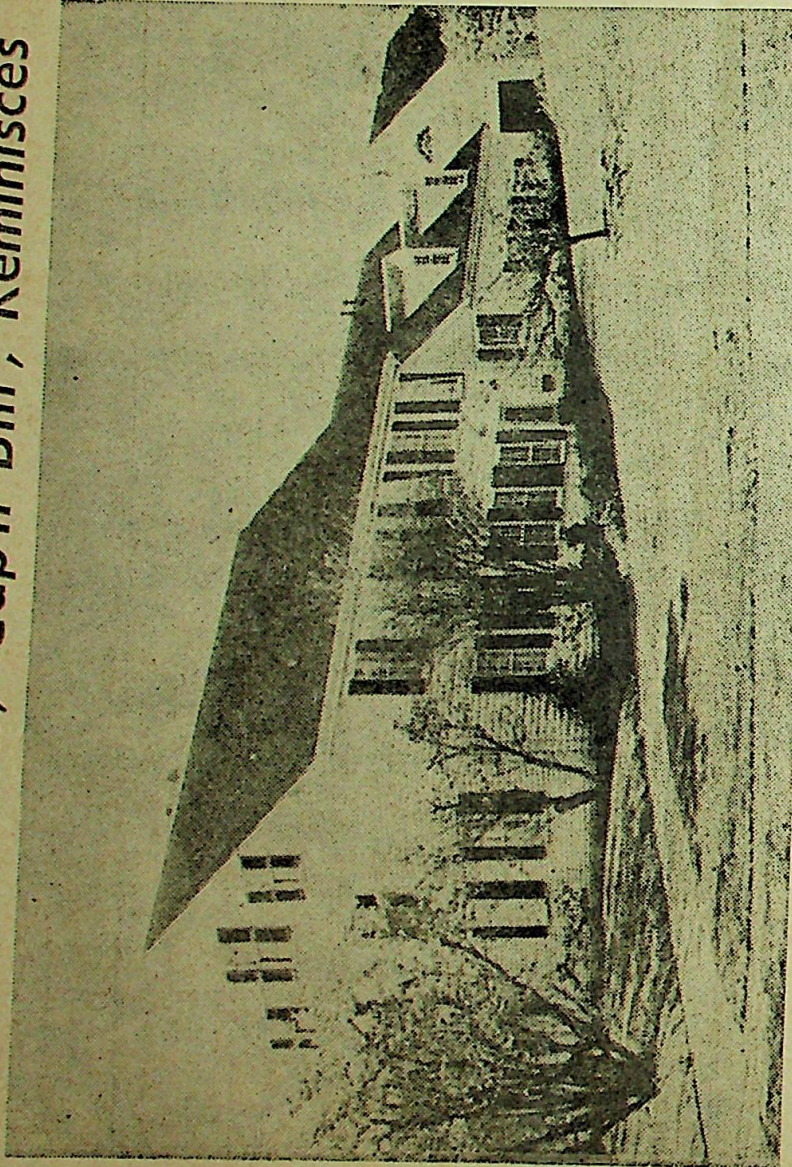


Ancient Mariner, 'Cap'n Bill', Reminisces



THE 1650 HOUSE AT 597 MAIN STREET, HINGHAM

OLD SCITUATE HERITAGE
by William 'Cap'n Bill' Vinal

III
Joshua Wilder and Elijah Damon
Agreement to

"Build me a House and Barn at Hingham, August 14, 1816". I, Joshua Wilder agree to furnish a tall clock to Elijah Damon the one in my hall upon the completion of a house and barn on my lot in Hingham and to furnish the following articles for its construction: Brick 1300, Lime 4 barrels, all lumber except for frame, all flooring, all shingels, everything needed for the construction of a noble house and to be in a work man like manner. Nails, dowels, hardware to be extray.

You to furnish all labor & to erect the frame. There is to be a middle post at each end of the frame & 3 on each side & 4 Beams and 4 pair Rafter's the Biggest to be Tennanted in. The post to be 8 1/2 ft. between joints. The Rafter's & beams you may take a champer off or not as you like. The frame they want a week from next Saturday and Leavitt will want his Doars at the same time. You to furnish the doars & doar frames, windows & window frames. The House to be 51' x 40'. I furnish the glass. You do all brick work and plumbing. I to furnish all lead for flashing and plumbing. I to have the seller dug & the stone laid up. Well is already dug. If I have pillars on overhang I will pay for them myself, but you are to put them in. The fireplaces are to be carefully made and guaranteed to drawer. All mantels I will furnish and all iron lintels. The frame is to be white oak as follows: (Here appears a long list of Sel. Beam, Girts, Posts, Summers, Raft, for house and barn).

You may make the frames at Scituate & haul them here. I will pay you \$30 haulage if you decide to construct at Scituate. I will pay your board hear for not over 36 weeks at not over \$1-25 per week. I will have the write to supervise the work & to order you to discharge any workman I may decide is not performing in a work man like manner.

Witness
Stephan Damon
Joshua Damon
Elijah Damon
Additions to above
I agree to keep the clock in repair forever free of charge as long as we live, but on our deiths this ends.
J. W.
I will bld the shettlers at my expense.
E. D.
I will finish the house by June 1, 1817
I will finish the barn by Jan. 1, 1818
E. D.
I will have a cellar for manure dug & stoned under the barn 168 x 10' at my expense
J. W.
I will pay to \$20 haulage barn frame
J. W.
I will pay up to 24 weeks board xtry for barn work
J. W.
I to build a wood sink
J. W.

All work extray I will pay for, but only such extray work as it not anticipate at present. You to receive \$1.25 per day for extray work & Daniel 50c. J. W. Outside doors & fraims & all windows to have 1 coat before installing.
J. W.
I agree to above
E. D.

Hare to be furnished by me J.W.
NOTES: This is an amazing document. Elijah is to enjoy the ticking of a grandfather clock made by the inventive genuity of Joshua Wilder. A Wilder grandfather clock today is valued at considerable over \$1000. Clock tinkers use to travel the Scituate countryside playing their trade. We are waiting for a clock mender at the present time, but probably in vain. That Wilder clocks tick today is a great testimony to honest skilful workmanship.

It would be of great interest, nearly a hundred and forty years ago, to have listened to Joshua and Elijah addressing each other about additions to the agreement, especially when Elijah said "How can I keep that clock a going: I pray that, out of your great skill, you will fix it." Quoth Joshua, the Quaker, who knew the mechanical durability of the contraption: "I will go a keettle further, and keep ye clock in repair forever." The use of the word "drawer" is of interest. Phonetically it probably referred to draft or draught. The word draw must have an interesting history. We draw out in speech, the calf draws a cow dry, we draw (vice-rate) fowl, we play draw games, etc. Elijah and Joshua understood each other when they agreed to make the chimney "drawer."

WHO WAS JOSHUA WILDER?

Joshua Wilder (Dec. 1786-d. Oct. 3, 1860), a contemporary of Elijah Damon, was the fifth generation of Wilders in Hingham. Edward Wilder, the original settler, received a grant of 10 acres in 1637. He also owned land between Town's Bridge and Wilder's Bridge on Main Street, South Hingham. December 1, 1675, Edward was one of sixteen Hingham soldiers in King Philip's War. Edward died October 18, 1690. Joshua Wilder was one of twenty children, all born in the same house. His ancestors were farmers. His father Edward, was Captain of a military company. Joshua Wilder was an apprentice to John and Calvin Bayley of Hanover. He concluded his apprenticeship in about 1807. In 1812 he married Judith Shearman. They had seven children. Ezra, born in 1819 carried on his father's work of manufacturing and repairing clocks, timepieces, and watches. Joshua's "Cape Cod" house, in which his children were born and he died, was built in 1816 by Elijah Damon. We have already seen that Elijah was paid in part "by a tall clock." On July 1, 1820

Joshua sold Elijah one wall clock for \$35.00. July 31, 1831 he rented Elijah a watch, — "Rental of a man's watch for 9 months."

According to a deed, Edward Wilder of Hingham in consideration of \$248 sold "A pease of land on the southeast corner of My Home land with a shop standing their on bounded as follows Beginning at the South east corner of the shop and running with the shop and fence westerly six rods fourteen feet & 3 inches to the Southeast corner of the school house" etc. This was signed 13 February, 1812.

Another document of interest is as follows: "Know All Men by These Presents, that we Allen Cushing Housewright and Laban Cushing Hatter, both of Hingham, in Consideration of \$210 paid by Joshua Wilder of Hingham aforesaid Clock & Watchmaker convey unto the said Joshua Wilder his heirs and assigns forever the Building to the underpinning lately owned and occupied as a store by Seth Cushing Jr deceased standing at the southwest-erly corner of the late Homestead of said deceased, with the appurtenances, subject however to the following conditions Viz the Building aforesaid shall be removed off the premises where it now stands in fifty days from the date hereof. June 7th 1830. Book 169 folio 72 P. Cotton Regr. Joshua or "Quaker" Wilder had his shop at what is now 605 Main Street, South Hingham, between Friend and High Streets, and next door to the store. The Cape Cod house is now occupied by Mrs. Wilder, widow of Fred S. Wilder, and a great grandson of Joshua.

Less than a month before passing away, Joshua sold to Ezra, his son, all tools and equipment for "five dollars and other good services." This Bill of Sale is of interest in that it shows what a clock artisan of that day possessed: "All tools — Engines — Lathes — Files — Forging or Smithing and Cabinet or Carpenters tools and Grindstones in or about the shop that he now occupies, and also my timepiece regulator in said shop & all partially manufactured Clock work, or other manufactured material of every name or nature now owned by me in said shop — including Watch, mainsprings, Hands Keys &c. — with all of my old second hand watches whether at this time at my home, or lent, or hired out abroad" — So Hingham Sept. 10th 1860. Joshua's shop was moved across the street in about 1904.

It has been of interest to note that Joshua was a Quaker. Also that he made wooden clocks and originated the "Baby Grandfather," or "Grandmother Clocks", so-called. In the Hingham Gazette February 28, 1828 he has an article on Public Schools.

NOTES: These items about Joshua Wilder show one discovery leads to another. That Joshua Wilder should pay for the building of his house with a "tall clock" is interesting. That his clocks have stood the test of time and that his "Baby Grandfather Clocks" have recently sold for

over \$1000 is a testimony that when he advertised in a Hingham paper that his timepieces were "all warranted to perform well" that he meant what he said. His honesty and fame have come down through the generations. The history of the Wilder family is not unlike the Damons, and the relation of Joshua to Elijah was more than a mere acquaintance. It is an example of what should be a challenge to a high school student in Hingham. The brief resume that appears in this paper was obtained from the papers loaned by Mrs. Fred Wilder, who resides in the Joshua Wilder homestead, and from the History of Hingham, Genealogical, Vol. III, page 321. This is not as much a digression from "Old Scituate" as might at first be thought, in that Joshua Wilder apprenticed in Hanover, once a part of Scituate; in that he exchanged his skill with a Scituate artisan; and, without doubt, "Wilder Clocks" may now be "unearthed" in "Old Scituate." Who made your "Grandfather Clock," or is it a "Grandmother Clock"? And, do we need to repeat, that the purpose of this paper is to demonstrate "How Local History Can Still Originate?"

* Hingham and Scituate were self-sufficient communities. They depended on local talent. They sometimes crossed the line for "ingenuity." Hingham had a population of 2500 at this time and their own blacksmiths, shoemakers, tanners, millers, housewrights, and hatters. Joshua Wilder was a man of ingenuity.

* The "1650 House" at 597 Main Street, Hingham.